



MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

February 10, 2009

Pieces Of History In Vermont Mental Health

The “Pieces of History” series in the Mental Health Update describes key events and significant policy milestones in the evolving Mental Health Systems of Care, thus, connecting our past to the present.

1986 A significant milestone for Supported Employment programs occurred when Vermont’s community mental health agencies began to receive funding from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in 1986 to hire additional mental health staff to provide employment services. Thus, began a partnership that set Vermont apart from many other states. Whereas, other states typically had VR staff placed at their agencies, Vermont mental health agencies established Supported Employment as an essential element of community integration and, ultimately, recovery. Numbers of individuals with mental illness receiving supported employment services grew from approximately 500 in the late 1980s to over 1,100 today. Success at finding employment grew from ten percent to thirty percent during this period. Another milestone was reached in 1998, when community mental health agencies began implementing Evidence Based Supported Employment, a well-researched and highly effective practice for providing supported employment services. Employment outcomes tripled in 2001 after implementing this integrated approach. Prior to this, each agency used its own method of providing employment services based on a variety of employment models that had little supporting research. As of 2008, all Vermont community mental health centers offer Evidence-Based Supported Employment as part of an integrated community rehabilitation and treatment approach that encompasses housing, employment, and community supports for people with a serious psychiatric disability. More than fifty percent of the individuals who have access to a supported employment program find employment in their community. Employed individuals with a mental illness earned over \$5,000,000 in 2008 and provided over \$600,000 in state and federal tax revenue, almost \$200,000 going directly to Vermont. These significant gains reflect the recognition and support of Vermont employers that reasonable accommodations in the workplace for individuals with psychiatric disabilities go a long way toward economic growth of our communities and effective mental health treatment for consumers’ recovery.

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

Point-In-Time Homeless Count Taken

Earlier this month, the 2009 Point-In-Time survey was conducted. Between 150 to 200 Homeless Provider agency staff and volunteers outreached and engaged the homeless in all communities across Vermont. It took a census of what many expect to be a significant increase in homelessness across the state. The Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA), Vermont Agency of Human Services (VAHS), Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), and the Chittenden County County CoC all collaborated with many community agencies serving the homeless to support this years count and to learn more about the nature of homelessness in Vermont. Local agencies will be sending information to VSHA and Data Remedies to develop reports over the next few weeks. Reports are anticipated in March.

DMH Applies to participate in the "100 Pioneers for Smoking Cessation Virtual Leadership Academy"

SAMHSA recently solicited applications from its current grantees for the "100 Pioneers for Smoking Cessation Virtual Leadership Academy," which represents SAMHSA's first attempt to drive down the high number of people with behavioral health issues who smoke. Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death, causing about 440,000 deaths per year in the United States, almost half among people with mental and substance use disorders. Winning applicants with the most promising strategies will receive an honorarium of \$1000, and the 100 Pioneers will commit to participating in an orientation conference call and at least two training webinars.

Through its application to this program, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in partnership with the Department of Health (VDH), has proposed to expand the degree to which individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders are screened for tobacco use and referred to smoking cessation resources that are currently available to Vermonters. If funded, this project will be tied to the Vermont Integrated Services Initiative (VISI) to implement integrated mental health and substance use disorder treatment. For more information, contact Nick Nichols at nick.nichols@ahs.state.vt.us.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

VT ARC Project for Children's Mental Health Programs – Mid-Year Update

The community mental health agencies' Children's Programs continue to have 3-5 clinical staff participate in the ARC Project. The ARC Project, sponsored by DMH Child, Adolescent & Family Unit, offers agency staff year-long training & consultation on the Attachment, Self-Regulation & Competencies (ARC) framework for the treatment of complex psychological trauma in children and their families. Margaret Blaustein, Ph.D., of The Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute in Massachusetts and co-developer of the ARC framework, is the consultant on the project.

The Project began with several trainings in September 2008, as reported in a previous Mental Health Update. Beginning in October 2008, forty-five agency staff plus DMH Children's Unit staff, have participated in monthly 90-minute phone consultations with

Dr. Blaustein. The consultations have offered discussion of components of the ARC framework, implementation ideas, and application of the model to a case example presented by one of the agencies each month. On February 3rd, the ARC Project participants from around the state came together for a half-day meeting with Dr. Blaustein in White River Junction. One of the components of the Project is for clinicians to become more familiar with standardized trauma assessment instruments and screening tools (Trauma Symptoms Checklist for Children, Parent Stress Index and Child Behavior Checklist). The February in-person meeting offered a helpful discussion about the use of these assessment instruments in clinical work with children and families. The case example, provided by HCRS, participants also shared their ideas and experiences of the early stages of implementing the framework in their clinical work, providing training on the concepts to other agency staff as well as community partners (schools, DCF), and barriers or struggles in the process of implementation.

The monthly phone consultations will continue through September 2009, with another in-person half day training scheduled for June in Burlington. The overall goal for the ARC Project is that implementation of the ARC framework will increase the community mental health providers' clinical skills to assess, treat, and achieve positive outcomes for children who have experienced trauma and their families.

FUTURES PROJECT

Care Management

The Consulting Team is working on drafting the report on care management system structures, quality assurance, quality improvement and utilization, and acute and longer term program descriptions. The Care Management Steering Committee will meet March 12th and April 9th to review and discuss these draft work products. Both meetings are from 10:00 to 12:30. The March meeting will be held in the Department of Corrections Chapel Conference Room; in April we will meet in Burlington at DMH Room 3B.

Meadow View Residential Recovery Program: Stakeholders Advisory Group Meeting

The Stakeholders Advisory Group for Meadow View Residential Recovery Program took place on January 9th at 51 Fairview Street in Brattleboro. Jane Winterling, Education Coordinator for Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, did a presentation on Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP). It was evident during discussion that WRAP will be a useful tool for recovery at Meadow View. Staff should receive training in the WRAP process and be able to support residents who choose to make a Wellness Recovery Action Plan. The Emergency Response Planning Team gave an update on what has been learned about the ONH process and how it applies to Meadow View residents being admitted to the recovery program from VSH. The HCRS liaison and the Meadow View director visited VSH and Second Spring on January 27th to meet two potential residents for the program. Both expressed interest in moving to the recovery residence when it opens. Considerable progress has been made in facility development. Plans for the renovations are being finalized and the COA will be submitted in the coming week. Jennifer Marandino, HCRS Peer Recovery Specialist, shared feedback from the Peer Recovery Focus Group on the mission statement and suggestions for structure and use of recovery models. The next meeting of the Stakeholders Advisory Group will be on March 9th at 2:30 PM at the

HCRS office on 51 Fairview Street in Brattleboro. For further information, please contact George Karabakakis, COO, at HCRS, 802-886-4567; Ext. 2135.

VERMONT INTEGRATED SERVICES INITIATIVE (VISI)

VISI Forum

The VISI Forum met Friday February 6, in Randolph Vermont. The major agenda item was review of the effectiveness of the VISI model of support for out-patient integrated treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions, in order to make improvements to this coming year's work. There was also discussion regarding peer services, and how to most effectively coordinate with formal clinical services. The possibility of using a train-the-trainer model to administer the Dual Diagnosis Competency Assessment Training, (DDCAT) program fidelity assessments next year, was considered. Notes from the meeting will be made available. (Contact: psinger@vdh.state.vt.us)

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL

SAMHSA Seclusion & Restraint Reduction Grant

The Seclusion and Restraint Reduction Interventions project has had a busy start in the New Year. January was filled with two important events. A three day visit by the Office of Technical Assistance to assess our baseline practices for the six core strategy interventions, took place in January. Also occurring was the VSH Celebration Fair to recognize the excellent work done by members of the hospital community in the past, presently, and into the future. So far this month, the VSH Leadership members have developed a weekly meeting which reviews all hospital data that is relevant to the goal of reducing the use of emergency involuntary procedures at Vermont State Hospital. Leadership then uses the information to create interventions and performance improvement projects using the Six Core Strategies as a reference. This weekly review in itself is identified as an intervention and was highly recommended by the technical consultants during their interview with Terry Rowe, the VSH Executive Director. The grant has also begun discussions with Tina Champagne, who is a renowned expert in the use of sensory modulation and trauma-informed practice. Tina will be consulting and training VSH staff over the next three years and will help develop the strategic interventions for the continued improvement of the patient care currently occurring at the Vermont State Hospital. Any questions about these interventions or other questions about the grant to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint please contact Ed Riddell at 241-2303 or eriddell@vdh.state.vt.us

Vermont State Hospital Celebration Fair Was a Success!

The two events on Wednesday and Thursday of last week to celebrate the VSH community, and all of the good works being done by all of its many members, was well attended. Approximately 110 people attended the two events and many robust discussions were had about improving on the work that we are doing now. Thank you to all who attended, learned a little more about the Violence Prevention Community Meetings, and the Six Core Strategies to Reduce Seclusion and Restraint and chose to share your views. These events would not have been as spectacular without the food creation contributions by the Patient's Cooking Group. Their collaboration with the members of the Celebration

planning committee made these two events a success. Great Big Thanks go out to the more than twenty volunteers and staff members whose teamwork created such a successful outcome.

For those who could not attend or missed the sign up:

We are looking for volunteers for a rules review work group. The group would be involved in identifying and providing insight about the rules that are currently used on the units. The group will then make recommendations to Leadership about possible rule modifications. Six staff members have already signed up and I am looking for many more. This will be a large undertaking by the entire hospital, so don't be left out. The more people who show interest in this work, the more it signals that we are ready as a community to improve in this area. Please call or email me if you are interested and I will add you too the list.

Again, thank you to all who were involved in and attended the very successful Celebration Fair.

Fred Friendly Seminars

Dr. Tom Simpatico VSH Medical Director, and Project Director for the SAMHSA Veterans Jail Diversion Grant was an invited panelist for the Fred Friendly Seminar entitled, "Minds on the Edge: Facing Mental Illness". The hour-long seminar was recorded in Washington, D.C. on January 31st, and will be aired on PBS this fall. The Fred Friendly Seminars are organized by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in conjunction with Harvard University. They use the Socratic Dialogue format to elucidate important problems facing our society. Using a hypothetical case history and a skilled moderator, the Seminars compel panelists to decide how to act in complicated situations where the "right" choices are not clear. As panelists wrestle with the hypothetical, a tense and spontaneous drama is created that illuminates complex questions in stimulating and engaging ways. The Seminars have proven uniquely effective in exploring knotty ethical, legal and public policy issues and in creating the basis for panelists to "talk to each other, rather than shout past each other".

Dr. Simpatico joined 12 other panelists including U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephen Breyer, Nobel Laureate Dr. Eric Kandel, authors Pete Early and Elyn Saks, and a group of clinicians, attorneys, judges, consumers, public administrators and program directors. In addition to airing on PBS, the program will have a dedicated website, and a priority channel on YouTube. More information about the Fred Friendly Seminars Series may be found at www.fredfriendly.tv/.

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 48 as of midnight Monday. The average census for the past 45 days was 45.2